REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-7 and 9-23 remain pending in the present application. Claims 1, 11, 17 and 20 have been amended. Basis for the amendments can be found throughout the specification, claims and drawings as originally filed.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1, 3-7 and 9-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Harper, et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 4,596,321). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. Claims 1, 11 and 17 have been amended to define the valves as being single direction valves. As defined by Harper, et al. valves 54 are bi-directional valves (column 4, lines 56-60).

In addition, Claims 1, 11 and 17 have been amended to define that the compressible device creates a preload to urge the valve into a closed position. Springs 92 and 97 in Harper, et al. offset each other such that there is no force urging the valve into a closed position. This position is required in Harper, et al. so that valve element 64 can be rotated freely (column 8, line 63 to column 9, line 11).

Thus, Applicants believe Claims 1, 11 and 17, as amended, patentably distinguish over the art of record. Likewise, Claims 3-7, 9, 10 and 12-18, which ultimately depend from one of these claims, are also believed to patentably distinguish over the art of record. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 19 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Harper, et al. in view of Ergun (U.S. Pat. No. 4,823,922). Claim 19 depends from Claim 17. As discussed above, Claim 17 has been amended and is now believed to patentably distinguish over the art of record. Thus, Claim 19 is also believed to patentably distinguish over the art of record. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 20-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Harper, et al. in view of Faure (U.S. Pat. No. 3,706,363). Claim 20 has been amended to define the step of orientating at least two single direction rebound valves and arranging at least two single direction compression valves where the compression valves are separate from the rebound valves. Harper, et al. uses bi-directional valves as discussed above.

In addition, the present invention defines the step of rotating a nut to adjust each of the rebound valves to open sequentially. The nut 80 in Harper, et al. is rotated to balance spring 92 with spring 96 as discussed above and does not adjust the valve. In Harper, et al., the opening load in one direction is a combination of springs 92 and 97 in series and in the other direction the opening load is a combination of springs 92 and 97 in parallel (column 8, lines 22-62). While not discussed in Harper, et al., the only way to change the opening load is to change the design of the springs not adjust the nut 80. Nut 80 is adjusted to balance the springs such that valve element 64 lies in the area between the compression and rebound ports and it is not adjusted to vary the opening load.

Thus, Applicants believe Claim 20, as amended, patentably distinguishes over the art of record. Likewise, Claims 21-23, which ultimately depend from Claim 20, are also believed to patentably distinguish over the art of record. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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